News Releases

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Social Services and Seniors

GOVERNMENT SEEKS PUBLIC INPUT ON NEW AGE OF ENTRY POLICY

CHARLOTTETOWN, PEI -- The provincial government is asking parents and educators for their input on how to implement a new policy that will move the cutoff date to enter kindergarten and school from October 31 to December 31.

When the policy is fully implemented, children will be eligible to enter kindergarten if they are five years old by December 31, and school if they are six years old by December 31.

There will be no change in age requirements during the coming 2008-2009 school year. The current eligibility date of October 31 will not change until at least September 2009. Future changes will occur first in kindergarten and then in school.

A web site is now available at **www.gov.pe.ca/go/ageofentry** where people can find information on the policy and participate in an online survey.

The survey asks participants whether they would prefer that the policy be implemented over a two-year period or a three-year period. Survey participants can suggest other implementation options and ways to facilitate a smooth transition to the December 31 cutoff date.

Education and Early Childhood Development Minister Gerard Greenan advised that the change in policy will have several benefits for Island children and families. "It will allow children to benefit from kindergarten and school programs at an earlier age. It will put the PEI age of entry in line with other provinces and address growing mobility issues facing families moving to and from PEI," he said.

The minister added that the cutoff date is December 31 in all provinces except two. Canadian ministers of education are now working collaboratively to coordinate age of entry policies so that children do not lose a year of school when moving from one province to another.

Government will use the input from the survey and stakeholder meetings to decide how the new policy will be phased in. This announcement is expected in July.

Print copies of the survey can be obtained by calling the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development at 902 368 4084.

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Media Contact: Jean Doherty.

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